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# Memo Re: Gorbachev selection

3rd March 1985

**Memo to:** Politburo, Central Committee

**From:** KGB Directorate, Desinformatsiya

**Re:** Comrade Gorbachev selection as Party Secretary

1. Since it has been decided by Soviet Party law that Comrade Gorbachev is to succeed Comrade Chernenko, we recommend the following approaches to influence development of public opinion in the West, particularly the United States.\*

2. The most important first step is to announce Comrade Gorbachev's selection as soon as possible — within hours after Comrade Chernenko steps down. Such an announcement would affirm the unbreachable stability of our Marxist-Leninist system and avoid needless speculation about the succession among those inveterate Western idlers who call themselves Sovietologists.

3. We must show that Comrade Gorbachev is a new broom, not only young and vigorous but also one who brings a fresh breath of air to a world stifled by imperialism and colonialism. He personifies the New Detente.

4. Comrade Joe Adamov is to arrange as a gesture of good will to the American media a live satellite interview as soon as Tass announces Comrade Gorbachev's selection. In the likely event that President Reagan declines to come to Moscow for the obsequies for Comrade Chernenko, we must emphasize to the Western media that Prime Minister Thatcher will attend as head of state, thereby disparaging President Reagan. Of course, we know well that in Britain, the Queen is head of state while Thatcher is only head of government. In America, the president is both head of state and head of government. But the correspondent who will interview Comrade Adamov, one can be certain, is ignorant of these simple facts.\*\* Thus we can show, by invidious comparison of Reagan and Thatcher, Reagan's heartlessness and his rabid anti-communism.

The following is a poor but adequate translation from the Russian original of a secret memorandum, prepared by the Soviet secret police, the KGB, to the Soviet Politburo. It makes clear that Mikhail Gorbachev's selection as Soviet Numero Uno had been made at least 10 days before Constantin Chernenko's death, whenever that was. The memorandum was found in a corked but empty Stolichnaya vodka bottle in a Leningrad canal. Competent people who are always fishing in Leningrad canals found the bottle and its important contents a few days ago. The footnotes are mine.



*Continued*

5. We must press our basic propaganda theme among our agents of influence and useful idiots that Comrade Gorbachev's youth means hope and progress. True, Comrade Stalin was 10 years younger when he achieved power. However, that argument should be countered with the theme that Comrade Gorbachev's accession means we have entered a new historical era, the era of the New Détente.

6. Emphasizing the "youth" theme has another advantage, in that it will make Western public opinion, especially in the United States, sensitive to the fact that our Marxist-Leninist leader is a young man compared to his two aged adversaries, Reagan, leader of world imperialism, and Deng Hsiao-Ping, leader of the counterrevolutionary forces.

7. Our agents of influence must immediately begin to press for a summit meeting without preconditions of any kind. In the event Reagan pre-empts that proposal with one of his own, our position should be to keep the proposal under "urgent study" while leaking stories to Western media and especially to friendly members of the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees that Reagan is making a summit meeting difficult because Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Voice of America propaganda is so insulting to Comrade Gorbachev.

8. We must not try again our highly successful ploy which transformed Comrade Andropov into what U.S. media personalities called a "closet liberal." To have removed the "stigma," by Western standards, of Comrade Andropov's past in our country which is so fearful of the FBI and CIA, was one of our greatest coups. Although this was not so great a coup as selling the Stalin Constitution in the 1930s as even more democratic than the constitutions of the United States and France.

9. A new atmosphere must be created for Comrade Gorbachev without in any way, however, affecting the present positive correlation of forces. To change that atmosphere, we further recommend the following:

10. Without any formal announcement, there is to be an increase of Jewish emigration. The emigrant Jews must be told that any gloating or propagandizing will only make it difficult for other Jews to emigrate. They will be told to emphasize that their emigration is due to Comrade Gorbachev's New Détente policies. The reports on this policy should be leaked to friendly journalists in the Western media. Perhaps Comrades Victor Louis and Georgi Arbatov, *inter alia*, could help on this.

11. We should carefully consider the immediate release of Sakharov and the Jew Shcharansky. Again, no formal announcement. If this proposal is agreed to, we should consider even sending them abroad with appropriate warnings.

12. As part of the New Détente, we suggest inviting return of those like Solzhenitsyn and Alexander Zinovie (and others on our special list) to visit their estranged motherland. They are to be given full guarantees that if they do not wish to remain they will be free to return to the West. In the event of a summit conference in America, Comrade Gorbachev should invite Solzhenitsyn to a one-on-one meeting at a suitable rendezvous in New England.

13. Photographs of Mrs. Gorbachev should be distributed to Western media through Victor Louis. First, we could thereby obtain valuable hard currency from the sale of such photographs. Second, such media exposure would help us with the women's movement, which still eludes our controlling influence except for the women's peace mobilization organizations. We should offer photos of Mrs. Gorbachev visiting children's hospitals, fashion shows, ballet and opera, even appearing on television with such leading American female personalities as Shirley MacLaine, Jane Fonda, and Geraldine Ferraro. Mrs. Gorbachev should be highly visible at any summit meeting as personifying the New Soviet Woman of the New Détente. Peace meetings for women could be arranged.

Americans like personality stories about their elites and will enjoy, to our benefit, reading positive stories about our *nomenklatura*. Stories in women's magazines about Mrs. Gorbachev should be a priority.

14. We must encourage Western media interviews with Comrade Gorbachev, especially American television programs like "Meet the Press," "Face the Nation," or "Sixty Minutes." The bitter competition among the major American networks and newspapers for "exclusive stories" or interviews makes the media wide open for such interviews with Comrade Gorbachev.

15. If it is agreed that some anti-Soviet elements like Shcharansky

should be released, then it should be done upon making proper arrangements with the Rev. Jesse Jackson. He should be invited to meet Comrade Gorbachev with the same understanding that he had with the comrades in Cuba and Syria that certain prisoners would be released in his custody because of our great respect for the black people and his leadership. It might be useful to the Rev. Jesse Jackson if a number of Jews are also included.

16. We also suggest that Mrs. Martin Luther King be invited to dedicate in the Soviet Union, a university or a forest or a hospital named after him.

17. We should initiate discussions with Israel about diplomatic recognition. For too long our directorates have been denied placements of agents in Israel. It has been quite difficult to engage in a useful program of "active measures" there because of our lack of diplomatic relations. Objection by our Arab comrades to renewal of such relations could be countered with the powerful arguments that development of Soviet intelligence assets in Israel would be of inestimable value to them.

18. This is the first of our charter of proposals. We should keep in mind our past successes, most recently, the valuable "dry run" of the Comrades Gorbachev when they visited Britain last month and the excellent meeting with Neil Kinnock, Labor Party leader. Let us not forget the highly successful visit to the U.S.S.R. by the child, Samantha Smith. There must be more children-to-children cultural exchanges.

\* The Russian words used were "glavini vrag," which mean "main enemy." This phrase is much used in official internal correspondence instead of "the United States."

\*\* And so it was that on the morning of 13 March, CBS carried a live satellite interview in which the correspondent allowed Adamov to get away with this statement.

\*\*\* Yuri V. Andropov was the sinister, all powerful head of the Soviet secret police for 15 years before winning the Communist Party secretaryship in 1982.

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